



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Testimony presented to the Environment Committee of

The Connecticut General Assembly

By the Connecticut Department of Agriculture

March 7, 2012

**S.B. No. 253 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE ANIMAL
IMPORTATION STATUTES**

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture has some concerns about changing the Animal Importation statute at this early date.

A definitive law on animal importation passed the General Assembly during the last regular session and has been in effect since October 1, 2011. During the past five months the Department of Agriculture registered eighty-nine animal importers. There have been a few, small non-compliance issues with some of these organizations and the Department has been assisting with the questions and issues brought forward. In the Department's view an excellent working relationship has been established with the vast majority of these organizations. Working hand-in-hand with a variety of rescue groups has led to the Department being alerted to illegal importation activity and of the shipment of dogs with illnesses being brought to our state. Recently the Department was made aware of two shipments of dogs being brought to Connecticut later this month by two non-compliant organizations.

This law has been in effect for a little over five months. The heavy adoption event season is about to begin and the Department would like the benefit of a full year's worth of experience before any changes are made to the existing law.

If, the legislature decides to revisit the importation issue, the Department of Agriculture would recommend some changes and additions. Currently, any dog or cat imported into Connecticut must be examined by a Connecticut veterinarian within forty-eight hours upon entering the State. In order to bring the timeline into conformance with other Department regulations we would suggest that the examination be done within seventy-two hours of entering the State. The Department strongly suggests that elimination of the initial importation exam would be diametrically opposed to the original intent of the law which was to assure that dogs and cats brought to our State were without disease and that the adopter was receiving a healthy animal. Just this past week the Department was made aware of a litter of parvovirus positive puppies imported into Connecticut from Arkansas. The initial veterinary examination led to the discovery, and consequently the puppies were isolated and the virus treated, which stopped the disease from being spread to other companion animals.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



In addition, the current law requires an animal importer, when importing a cat or dog into Connecticut and before offering it for sale, adoption, or transfer, and every 90 days until the sale, adoption, or transfer is complete, to have a state-licensed veterinarian examine the animal. Each animal must be examined by a state-licensed veterinarian within 15 days before a sale, adoption, or transfer. The Department is willing to forgo examinations every ninety days but strongly believes that all animals should receive a re-examination by a Connecticut veterinarian within fifteen days of the adoption.

The Department proposes that all dogs and cats imported into the State of Connecticut be micro chipped with health and identification records. This would assist the State and municipalities in determining the impact that imported animals may be having on their local animal control programs. More importantly, this would allow for easy identification of an animal with its health certificate and other documents from the state of origin.

With these three minor changes the proposed bill would assist rescue groups in importing into Connecticut disease free animals and protect adoptive families by insuring that their new pet was healthy.

Thank you for your consideration of the views of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.